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Singing

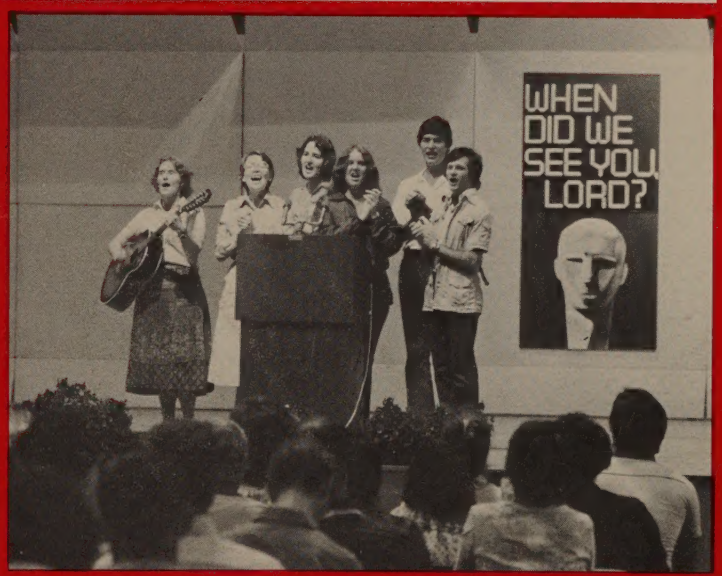
Special programs for children and young people

An afternoon of games for everyone See page 26

MARIAPOLIS 1981

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE MARIAPOLIS:

1) Listening to talks and experiences



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2 *REACHING TRUE SELF-FULFILLMENT: We are continuing here the publication of a series of talks given by Chiara Lubich on the "Will of God." "The way for us to become what we were meant to be, and to reach fulfillment as human beings, is to live according to God's image and likeness."*

7 *YOUTH WORKING FOR THE YOUTH The spirituality of the Focolare Movement has also penetrated many parishes all over the world, bringing with it new life. Recently a convention was held where some representatives from these parishes met together to consider one aspect of parish life: pastoral work among the youth.*

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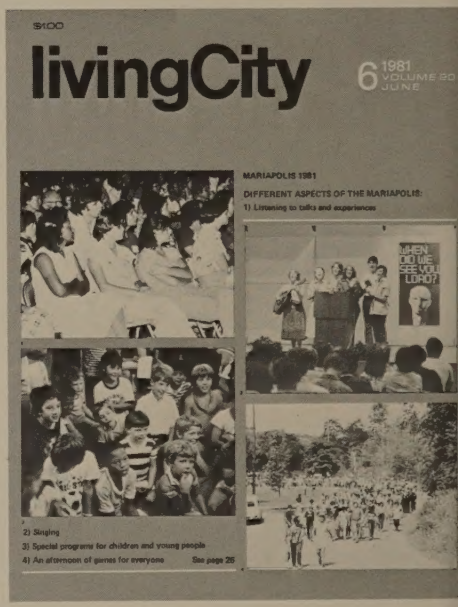
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4) An afternoon of games for everyone
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Living City is published 11 times a year (10 monthly and a bimonthly issue in August-September) by the Focolare Movement, a non-profit corporation, P.O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.
Subscription prices for one year: USA and possessions: US$10.00; Canada: US$12.00; Elsewhere: US$18.00; Air Mail (all countries): US$25.00.
An envelope is enclosed in each magazine for subscriptions or renewals. Use this address for subscription orders and inquires: LIVING CITY, P.O. Box 126, Jamaica, NY 11415.
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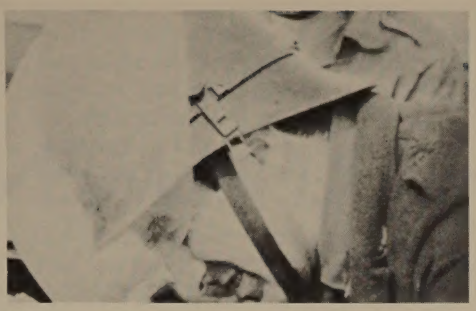
OTHER EDITIONS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

CHINESE: "San Sing Seung Yuet Hong" - 70 Waterloo Road 11 B/F - Kowloon - Hong Kong

DUTCH: "Nieuwe Stad" - St. Stephanusstraat 1 - Nijmegen - Holland

0 *PROVEN BY FACTS: The young people themselves share some of their experiences in the most various environments all over the world.*



15 *A LIFE LIVED FOR OTHERS: A brief glance at the life of Luciano Petik, who lost his life fighting a forest fire last January. His life had been a total giving of himself to those who are most abandoned.*

22 *THE VERY YOUNG AND THE GOSPEL: Can children under eight years of age understand and live the revolutionary message of the Gospel? We interviewed some Gen 4, young children of the Focolare Movement, who explained to us in their own words who they are and how they live.*

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lay 3, 1981. *An extraordinary day in the life of he Focolare Movement. 25,000 people from all ver the world packed the Sports Palace of Rome o participate in a "FAMILY FEST." It was the irst time a gathering of this kind for families ad been planned by the Focolare Movement.*

Chiara Lubich gave the opening address, ollowed by a kaleidoscope vision of the family n the world, and the problems it faces today, resented through a series of experiences of amilies from every continent.

The culminating moment was the arrival of Pope John Paul II. He addressed the crowd with ouching, powerful words that everyone listened o attentively, to then burst into an unending pplause.

The next issue of **Living City** *will be dedited to a special coverage of this unforgettable vent.*

Sharry Silvi,
Editor

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ENCH:
Nouvelle Cité" - 131, rue Castagnary F75 015
s - France
Nouvelle Cité" - C.P. 636 - St. Jerome - P. Q. -
ada - J7Z 5T9

RMAN: "Neue Stadt" - Gleissnerstrasse 87 -
0 Munchen 83 - Germany

ITALIAN: "Città Nuova" - Via degli Scipioni 265 - 00192 Rome - Italy

PORTUGUESE: "Cidade Nova" - Rua Pio XII 274 - Paraiso, Sao Paulo - Brazil

SPANISH:
1. "Ciudad Nueva" - Av. da Rivadavia 4939 - Buenos Aires 24 - Argentina
2. "Ciudad Nueva" - Ferrer del Rio - 1 esc A, 2º 5a Madrid - Spain

OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:
1. "New City" - 57 Twyford Avenue - London W3 - England
2. "New City" - P. O. Box 332 - Manila, Philippines
3. "New City" - 367 Balwyn Rd. - Balwyn North 3104 - Australia

REACHING TRUE SELF-FULFILLMENT

by CHIARA LUBICH

In the last issue of Living City *we printed the first part of a talk by Chiara Lubich which spoke of the relationship between God and humanity, and the plan for mankind's salvation as revealed in the Old Testament. Here she goes on to consider humanity's "yes" to God as it is proposed to us in the New Testament.*

We have seen that God has created us in his image and likeness, and that therefore the way for us to become what we were meant to be, and to reach fulfillment as human beings, is to live according to his image and likeness.

In the New Testament, now that God has sent us his Son, Jesus — who is God, yes, but God made man — to be like God, to conform ourselves to his image, means to conform ourselves to Jesus, or as Paul would say, "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). In the Son we reach our fulfillment as children of the Father, even up to the perfect likeness with God in heaven.

From what has been said up to now, it is clear that carrying out God's will makes us free, makes us more and more our true selves. Obeying God and adhering to his will furthers our development as human beings, releases our creativity and brings out our true personal identity.

Therefore, doing God's will is not something unnecessary or artificial, or in conflict with being oneself. It is not a question of resigning ourselves to a more or less desirable fate. And it is still less a matter of forcing ourselves to undergo an unpleasant situation saying: "God has decreed it so. So it must be. It is inevitable."

Doing God's will is something altogether different: it is the best thing we could possibly desire for ourselves. It is what we have been created for.

By doing God's will we are helping ourselves and others to see his plan for each of us personally and to come to a fuller realization of his overall plan to bring all people to salvation and to the glory of heaven.

The Commandments of the Old Testament express God's will for us, and are an expression of his love. He has given them to us for our good because he loves us. However, they do not express the whole of his will. His will is more complex, manifold — it goes beyond the letter of the Law understood even in its fullest sense.

In the fullness of time Jesus came to manifest God's will in its entirety. He did this in a total way, through his teaching and through his life.

His behavior — especially his giving of himself on the cross, where we see the meaning of the love he taught — has become the norm and criterion for Christian behavior: a norm which cannot be completely codified because it is life, it is love.

For a Christian, to do God's will means to "live like Jesus," that is, to live in a loving filial relationship with the Father which is expressed by doing his will.

Among the Jewish people, particularly after the exile, many felt that to be close as possible to what God wanted them to be, they had to know and observe all the precepts and restrictions of the Law to the letter. But often this observance was so scrupulous that they lost sight of the foundation of the Law itself, that is, the relationship of love that we must have with God.

Jesus, like the Prophets, spoke out against this deformation of the Law.

Jesus had no intention of nullifying Scripture because for Him, too, it was all God's Word. How-

ever, he said he had come to "fulfill" it (Mt. 5:17).

Jesus tried to show through his actions how some precepts of the Law were to be interpreted. For example, he healed on the Sabbath — which appeared to violate the Law — in order to explain that, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:27). He meant by this that there was no need for people to become entangled in a thousand subtle distinctions regarding the Sabbath observance, because God had given the obligation of the Sabbath out of love for man. Thus he put the Sabbath rest into its rightful perspective.

To follow Jesus means to accomplish the Father's will perfectly, as he did. He himself summed it up in the commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:12-13).

Jesus did not merely speak about this love which is God's will for the new era, but he lived it to the utmost. He was the first to have this total love for God and neighbor which he requires of others. In the picture we see a scene from the film, "Jesus of Nazareth," where Jesus cures a lame man.

When questioned by some of the Pharisees and Scribes regarding "the tradition of the elders," and asked why his disciples did not observe this, Jesus reminded his questioners that they had subordinated God's will to their own tradition, and he reasserted the importance of God's Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother" (Ex. 20:12). These Pharisees and Scribes, in fact, asserted that if someone offered God the money he would have used to help his parents, he was no longer obliged to assist them (see Mt. 15:1-9).

In short, Jesus acts as one who has a direct and authentic knowledge of the will of God expressed in the Law. He thereby reveals that he is the true interpreter of the Law.

He interprets it most clearly in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:21-48). There he refers to several commandments and customs, goes to their root, and recasts them in that new form and with that fullness toward which the Law itself had been directed. It is not enough not to kill; you must avoid anger toward your brother. Besides not committing adultery, you must not even desire another woman. Not only must you not swear falsely, but you should not swear at all. Not "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but "If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:38-39). Not "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy," but "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt. 5:43-44).

Jesus wants to prevent the observance of God's commandments from being reduced to mere external acts; he wants our hearts to change: "There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him" (Mk. 7:15). What is essential, therefore, is one's relationship with God. And this is confirmed by what Jesus says with regard to charitable acts and acts of worship: they must be done not in order to "be praised by men," but as an expression of personal love for God (Mt. 6:1-17).

Therefore God's will as presented by Jesus does not abolish the Law, but reveals a deeper and fuller dimension of the Law.

But in the fullness of time, the Law is no longer sufficient to express God's will in its entirety. What, then, is the will of God manifested by Jesus?

In announcing that the kingdom of God is near, Jesus says that we must convert in order to enter it. To convert means to leave everything, to sell everything in order to possess God, in order to enter his kingdom. We need only recall the parables of the hidden treasure and of the precious pearl, in which a man sells all he owns in order to buy them (Mt. 13:44-46). The Christian must therefore love God more than father, mother, wife, husband, fields — even more than life itself (Mt. 19:29; Lk. 14:26). Everything must be subordinated to God and set aside for love of him; materially by some, spiritually by all of us. Jesus invites each person to choose God in a total way.

He asks for more than what the Law required. Indeed, when he says, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:60), he seems to be going against the Law which commanded: "Honor your father and your mother."

Jesus takes the place of the law.

For Christians, Jesus is the Ideal to follow.

And to follow Jesus means to accomplish the Father's will perfectly, as he did. He himself summed it up in the commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn. 15:12-13).

Jesus did not merely speak about this love which is God's will for the new era, but he lived it to the utmost. He was the first to have this total love for God and neighbor which he requires of others. His way of living, his doing God's will in giving his life for others, is the new law which we must all follow.

Jesus not only asks us to imitate him in accomplishing the Father's will, but he offers us something greater, much greater. Having infused love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 5:5), he can now introduce us into his own relationship with the Father, as he says in his testament (Jn. 13-17) — into the very life of the Trinity. And he wants this Trinitarian life to influence and enter into our relationships with other people. In this lies the highest possible fulfillment of human nature, of humanity itself — its divinization." As the Church Fathers say, God became man in order to make man God.

The meaning of Jesus' words was more deeply grasped by the early Church after his death and resurrection, because of the example of his life.

For the early Church, and for Paul in particular, the Christian's new life has Christ as its reference point: He is the incarnation of God's will for the Christian. Paul writes, "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you" (Rom. 15:7). "Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2). "Your attitude must be that of Christ" (Phil. 2:5). Summing it up in a single phrase, Paul speaks of the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), that is, Christ as the law of a Christian.

In concentrating on the observance of the Law, there is a danger that one may look upon the commandments as external constraints, and consequently have a servile relationship with God and a legalistic approach to his Word. On the other hand there is the risk of becoming too self-confident and proud of one's ability to observe the commandments of the Law.

In the new order, however, the words of Jesus, written in human hearts, cannot be considered as something imposed from without. They cannot give rise to a servile relationship with God, nor can they be an occasion for boasting about oneself. God himself, through the Spirit, has poured love into our hearts, and this love is "the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10). In this way, what God wants becomes what each person wants in the depths of his or her heart.

In any case, a Christian can always be sure that it is God's will to love. How to love in the particular circumstances of one's everyday life is something one must discover. Each of us must know how to seek out and discern God's will. Paul says, "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed . . . so that you may judge what is God's will" (Rom. 12:2).

What God wants is what each person wants in the depths of his or her heart.

His will can be discovered moment by moment, by listening to the voice of the Spirit within us and being docile to it. Paul writes to the Galatians, "Walk by the Spirit" (5:16), by which he means: Be "led by the Spirit" (5:18).

So we must sharpen our supernatural sensitivity, the evangelical "instinct" that the Spirit has given us and which can be developed only by exercising it and putting it to use.

Paul holds that two things are necessary in order to obtain this greater sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. The first is to become part of a Christian community — to belong to a Christian community and to progress in living the life of mutual love within the community: "This is my prayer: that your love [that is, your Christian love lived in the community] may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best" (Phil. 1:9-10).

The second prerequisite is prayer, because the knowledge of God's will is a gift: "We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will" (Col. 1:9).

Since each Christian has the law of the Spirit in his or her heart, we might wonder whether the Commandments are still useful as rules of conduct to help us to carry out God's will.

They are useful, indeed, because the law of the Christian is love and love is difficult to codify. We know how easy it is to confuse our own opinions and desires with the voice of the Spirit within us, and how easy it is, as a consequence, to act in a purely subjective manner, following our own feelings and inclinations.

Given our human, earthly condition, love needs to be explained and guided by objective norms which make its practical application easier and serve as points of reference.

Seen in this light, the commandments become an aid for loving God and neighbor. And we Christians, convinced of this, should seek to understand the purpose behind each norm, the reason for its existence, in order to conform ourselves to the loving intention of the One who formulated it. Thus the written law is a precious means put at our disposal. It is not, however, the goal of our lives.

For God's will is not that we obey a code of ordinances, but that we love him and our fellow human beings; and in this lies the fulfillment of the Law. ●

TRANSCENDING OURSELVES

Compiled by GUGLIELMO BOSELLI

The previous issue of Living City *carried a feature article on the life of Piero Pasolini who died this past January. However, not all aspects of his manifold experience were covered in that article. Here Piero shares with us a profound experience of his life.*

Piero's articles in Citta Nuova *have been translated from Italian into many other languages, and readers of the twelve editions of the magazine have read them with great interest and appreciation for him.*

In recent years Piero also wrote for other magazines and newspapers. He was one of the initiators of the cultural review Nuova Umanita; *he wrote for the Italian edition of* St. Anthony's Messenger *that has a circulation of one and a half million copies, as well as for its other editions in six languages. Professor Zichichi, president of the Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics asked him at a certain point to write for the scientific page of* Il Tempo *of Rome. Many of his books have been published by* Citta Nuova *Publishing House and by the* Edizioni del Messaggero.

However, as Piero himself mentioned previously, he carried out other functions within the Focolare Movement. First he was director of the Movement's activities in northern Italy, then in Germany, France and Spain. While in France, he traveled often to England, giving a significant contribution to the initial growth and development of the Movement there. Then he returned to Italy and was first director of the Movement's activities in central Italy and Sicily, and later of the Gen Movement. In recent years he was a member of the General Coordinating Council for the entire Movement.

He did not talk too much about these activities, even though they were of great importance for the development of the Movement. Whenever he told his personal story, he preferred to go directly to the deeper aspects of it in order to give his listeners something that would remain with them. This is what he did during the meetings of formation for focolarini, married focolarini, volunteers and Gen that take place every year at Rocca di Papa. Reading what he said at these gatherings helps us to understand something of what he experienced personally.

Speaking to a group of married focolarini in 1971, Piero said:

"I once noticed something that threw me into a kind of intellectual crisis. I had seen societies, cities, nations throughout the world that were organized perfectly according to the mistaken principles of egoism. In these social structures each one had 'his own thing.' But I saw that everything functioned so perfectly in these systems that if someone went off his 'track,' he would be excluded from the rest; if someone put out his hand, it would be cut off. The system was like an inflexible machine and I asked myself if things really had to go ahead that way.

"I solved the problem by approaching it indirectly. I thought about the history of mankind. It began rather badly, with original sin, but, even then, there was a prospect on the horizon for a complete turn around. Christ came precisely in order to propose something that would counteract this fundamentally mistaken principle (which he called 'the prince of this world'), upon which humanity had begun to act and organize itself.

"Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' He came to bring a principle that was entirely new, the true meaning of which we will never fully understand. Love, which is the real law for joining things together in the correct way, is a gift, not a possession. When I truly love, I give a gift, I do not love in order to 'possess' the object I love. I love in order 'to give of myself' to the others.

Nietzsche also had come to the conclusion that the neurosis existing in the world today is due to the fact that instead of being founded on giving, our society is based on possessing, on having.

"It is possible for the human race to keep going ahead following the way of egoism, but if it does, it will destroy itself. But when it functions according to the law of love, it possesses within itself a transcendent principle, it undergoes a transformation, it becomes something else. Jesus came on earth in order to bring us this law which leaves the human organization intact, but changes the meaning behind it. He brought 'the law of love,' the new commandment, offering it as the basis for a society freed from 'the prince of this world.'

"This concept made me see the entire human dilemma in a new light. Why is it that the more progress we make, and the better organized society becomes, the more the relationships among people deteriorate? Why has society remained essentially at the same level? Because it did not contain within itself a 'transcendent' principle — that is, it could never become something else.

"The cybernetic principle has advanced our understanding of the evolution of beings and has organized matter and reality at a higher level, but why did we stop when we reached the human being and no longer transcended ourselves? Because we have lost sight of the fact that God creates everything out of love. All things

Piero Pasolini is seen here interviewing Paul Maffei, who is a researcher at the space astrophysics laboratory at Frascati, near Rome.

are intrinsically organized according to a line of love, and every reality is meant to transcend itself continually through an act of love. When this act of love involves human beings who have a conscience, and are intelligent, it becomes possible to refute it. Then things can go wrong, also collectively when there is a collective refusal. Therefore, mankind can remain closed within itself and finish without ever becoming something more.

"But Jesus came on earth, and the fact that he revealed himself in such a real way gave me the certainty that this collective act of transcending ourselves is possible. This is the 'cybernetic' act that humanity has to make: to join ourselves all together, one to the other, not in order to end up one in the other, but to end up in something that is beyond us — Jesus. We can call this, the 'cybernetics of the Gospel.'

"This is the great discovery that gave me so much joy: the law of life and the law of creation have the same foundation. God created everything out of love. The creation is a pure act of love by God who gives himself, he gives life. In the same way, every act of creation is an act of love. No one can create something without loving.

"I understood the evangelical way of viewing mankind and human life, that solves problems in a paradoxical way. Even social and economic problems, the need to find a new way of coexistence, and the equal distribution of goods, can be solved by 'living' the beatitudes. These problems are solved by forgiving our enemies, doing good to those who hurt us. Jesus made many paradoxical statements: he said that if we want to have many things we have to lose them; that every loss is a gain; you gain only what you lose. Go tell this to the bankers or the merchants. . . . But actually we are all afraid of taking a 'risk' such as this. Jesus solved social problems by saying that those who have left everything for him will have a hundred times whatever they have left. We have to believe in this in a radical way in order for it to work. In order to have a hundred times what you give, it is necessary to start giving.

This is exactly the opposite of what people usually think. We have to find a way of living together that does not make of us possessors, people who are well off, who have everything, but one that makes of us Jesus. Seeing to it that each person has 'his or her own thing' means condemning them to remain in their present situation; striving to satisfy the egoism that is within everyone means deforming that mechanism which could make each person become 'something more.' It would be necessary to organize humanity in such a way that each one would 'give' what is his or hers. The Gospel works not so much because it brings about the miracle that those who give receive; but because it expresses the law of love that is innate in all things."

Piero was a "lay person" in the true sense of the word. Together with this "being lay," he possessed an extraordinary freedom of spirit and a burning desire to reach an intimate contemplation of God. His words expressed his life, and he affirmed things not simply because they were to be affirmed, but because he was convinced of them. He once said:

"It was a mistake to try to explain God through scientific concepts: God cannot be explained in any way. This does not deny the fact that he makes himself understood in the depths of the soul of the researcher or philosopher. This understanding emerges from all the knowledge and all the reflections that a sincere person in good faith may have in his or her mind. God reveals himself; he is not explained. This is why, as we know, faith is necessary, as an infused virtue from God, given to be in contact with him, which in the last analysis leads us to knowledge. In my articles I try to bring out what I see underlying the logic of things because my goal is to get the reader to go beyond science." ●

YOUTH WORKING FOR THE YOUTH

Compiled by FATHER SILVANO COLA and FATHER PIERO CODA

Printed here experiences and ideas gathered at the international convention on pastoral work among youth. The three hundred participants were all persons committed to living the spirituality of unity of the Focolare Movement.

"Every person, side by side with others, will discover the greatness of his or her own humanity," because, ". . . we know that when we love one another the God-Man will be among us." This was the refrain of one of the theme songs heard last May at the 1980 Genfest in Rome. The same theme echoed again in our hearts this past December during a convention on the pastoral work of today's youth. About 300 people working in this field, two thirds of whom were young people from all over the world, met at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa near Rome.

The "point" that emerged during the meeting (not so much as a theoretical conclusion but rather as a concrete experience shared by all) was an awareness, that by fully embracing and living Christ's new commandment of mutual love, they have found the existential "formula" for building a society that is both new and universal — a society that is fundamentally human and radically Christian, and has interpersonal relationships as its essential dynamic force.

Like the preceding conventions which had focused on the themes of catechesis, evangelization, and the seminaries, this last convention was also aimed at gathering together, and sharing a substantial number of experiences — this time from young people in particular. These experiences, lived all over the world in various areas of pastoral work, have sprung from and are nourished by the spirituality of unity of the Focolare.

In spite of the functional term "pastoral," the convention was in no way directed toward discerning ways to win young people over to our side. Rather, its purpose was to learn about the needs that may be hidden in the world of today's youth, and to discover what concepts or ideals could fulfill them. While we do not wish to evaluate our findings here, we would like to offer some flashes of what was said during those days and report on some of the experiences that were shared, as well as the thoughts and reflections that were drawn from these experiences.

Let us make one thing clear, however: the material presented, though geographically representative of the whole world, was intentionally limited to ecclesial, diocesan and parochial youth groups who want to live the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. This limitation did not represent any problems or cause of concern for us. We know that it is wrong to think that all young people live in an anonymous world, that is extraneous to anything religious. And the Gen, like all young people belonging to any religious movement, are, unquestionally, young people of our day, the only difference being that they have begun to find some answers for themselves and for others. They have discovered something that meets their personal and common needs and aspirations, having found a spiritual source of strength that is based on a fully conscious acceptance of the cross and therefore does not remain something idealistic or utopian or strictly emotional. They know that this is necessary for building any true relationship of unity. This discovery has been a revelation for them — a revelation of their own true selves and, in some way, a revelation of the whole world and of God's plan for humanity. It has made them take the Gospel seriously because they have discovered, by living it, that Jesus has already given the answer to all their personal problems, to the questions that plague different cultures, and all of humanity. But in our contemporary world, this answer can and must be expressed only through a collectivity which can relive the adventurous and fas-

THE GOSPEL AND YOUTH

I think that after two thousand years, the Gospel is certainly strong enough; in fact, it holds a very strong attraction for young people. And the fundamental reason is this — there is a great affinity between the Gospel and the young.

Why? Because the Gospel contains words that are not like other words. The words of the Gospel are a presence of God. God is eternal youth and this is why there is affinity between the Gospel, which is the word of God, and the youth.

Besides, the Gospel represents an ideal that everyone can look to and young people are made for an ideal. They want to plunge themselves into an ideal, but usually they want an ideal which asks everything of them, and the Gospel is an ideal which asks everything. In fact when they read in the Gospel — and Jesus says this for everyone — "Who does not leave his father, mother, wife, children, fields, cannot be my disciple," the young people feel that something is asked of them which is very great, very big and therefore they are happy because Jesus is asking something of them. Jesus meant that we must leave everything, at least spiritually, in order to put him first in our lives.

In the same way when they read in the Gospel: "No one has greater love than he who gives his life for his friends," the young people are attracted by these words. Why? Because they are ready to give their lives, more than older people are. This kind of generosity is characteristic of youth.

Besides this, the Gospel is a Gospel of life. In fact, it is written in the Gospel that all the words said by Jesus must be transmitted into life, otherwise they serve no purpose. It is not enough to think about them, read them or meditate on them: we must live them. In the Gospel, there is the famous comparison of the house that is built on the rock. Whoever lives the Word of God is like the one who builds his house on the rock. The winds and the storms come, but the house remains. Instead whoever listens to the word of God and reads it but does **not** *put it into practive, is like a house built on sand: with the first strong wind the house crumbles.*

Young people are not made so much for chatter, for theories. They want to do something, to concretize things, to bring things to fulfillment, and so when they find someone who teaches them to live the Gospel, they plunge themselves into it.

Then there is something else. I don't think that there is in the world a more revolutionary text than the Gospel, and young people always love revolutionary things, any kind of revolution. The Gospel says for example, "Blessed are those who cry." This is a revolution. ". . . be perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect." This is a revolution. "Love your neighbor as yourself." As *yourself — also this is a revolution.*

The whole Gospel is a revolution and young people love it. Therefore, I think that after two thousand years the Gospel is more than ever up-to-date. Also through my personal experience with thousands of young people, I have seen how they are fascinated by the Gospel.

CHIARA LUBICH

(Taken from an interview with the Belgian television, 1977.)

cinating story of the Gospel, and, consequently influence the society around it.

In order to expound in depth all the main points of the spirituality which is the soul and moving force behind the experiences, Silvana Veronesi, who is responsible for the Gen Movement at an international level, presented every morning the basic methodology and some fundamental concepts that Chiara Lubich had given the entire movement, in particular to its second generation, the Gen.

In a report which was the point of reference for the entire program, Professor John Casoli presented a serious and, as he himself admitted, at times hard hitting analysis of the present day crisis of Western culture. "The heart of the matter," he emphasized in his introduction, "is the generation gap, which, if we go to the root of the problem, is due to the different 'spiritual universe' of today's youth as compared to that of the previous generation." It is a difference which, in the face of a "society that is disintegrating," (as is our present, officially accepted society, enslaved by many different ideologies,) calls for a "new society created by great people" who can project their way of living into interpersonal relationships thus influencing them in a vital way.

The first day ended with a round table discussion which included the speakers, a few experts, and all those present. The basic theme was constantly emphasized, namely that "the language of love, personal as well as communitarian, is the only language capable of penetrating the psycho-sociological walls we are raising between ourselves and others." After all, the cornerstone of the evangelical message is and remains: "We have believed in God's love," This round-table, with its lively, active dialogue that included the whole assembly, (especially the young) and the discussion groups the following day, contributed greatly to giving the convention a stamp of freshness and creativity.

The Pope To The Young

The response the Church has given, particularly through Pope John Paul II, to the urgent need to reach out to youth is powerful, and opens up hitherto unforeseen and broad horizons to the young people who are thirsting for something authentically "new." This was made clear in the second report given in the afternoon of the first day by Father Lino D'Armi. He gave a general outline of the basic norms which Christ, through the Church, offers to the youth of our day: "The only solid and indestructible foundation for unity is our status as children of God, a status that Christ won for us on the cross.

Many times our present Pope has called upon all to give human nature its true value, and to see it as a support for the supernatural, rather than in contrast to it. He urged the young people of Mexico, for instance, to be committed in the fight for human rights, in the advancement of scientific research, and so on, to make every effort toward reaching authentic, complete progress of their country, to work side by side without prejudice, with whoever is willing to work for the common good. He also invited the young people of Poland to be more and more involved in the life of their country. In the same way, he told American youth that only in Christ, who is the fullness of human life, could they give all their potential as citizens of the United States and of the world community. And, again, he turned to Rome's university students asking them to give their all to their studies and thus assure a proper preparation for their professional life, which should be seen as a service to humanity, as an act of love toward mankind.

His sermon at the Mass for the young people of Belo Horizonte in Brazil was a real lesson of catechesis for youth as the Pope led his audience first to envision and then to grasp the Transcendent. He started by pointing to the justified expectations of the young people of our day, making them his own; then he went on to give his own personal experience; and only then, after having prepared the ground, did he bring in Jesus Christ.

He said this to the young Brazilians: "Open to the social dimensions of man, you do not conceal your determination to change radically the social structures that you consider unjust. . . . In my youth I lived these same convictions. . . . I saw these convictions trampled upon in many ways. . . . One day I

A PROGRAM FOR UNITY

Dearest young people, new generation, you hold the world of the future in your hands! You have decided to make love the rule of your life. For this reason, the commitment toward unity has become your program. It is a program which is highly Christian . . ...

Those who know how to look at the future are those who make history. The others are dragged along and end up finding themselves at the margin of their existence, always bundled up in the network of their worries, projects, and hopes which in the end reveal themselves to be deceiving and alienating. Only those who commit themselves in the present without letting it capture them, but remaining with the eyes of their hearts always aimed at seeking ". . . the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1), can orient history towards its fulfillment.

(Excerpt from Pope's address to the Genfest, May 18, 1980.) POPE JOHN PAUL II

decided to confront them with Jesus Christ and I decided to defend them with him. . . . This tremendous and precious experience, taught me that social justice is true only if it is based on the rights of the individual. And that these rights will be really recognized only if we recognize the transcendent dimension of man, created in the image and likeness of God."

On the subject of "communion" and of "unity," John Paul II had already spoken during the 1980 Genfest last May. First of all he had emphasized that the prayer: "that all may be one" was a prayer that Jesus had addressed to the Father, and was not a recommendation directly addressed to us. "For Jesus knew too well that he could not rely entirely on us for making so radical a project come true." And the Pope went on to say that it is, in fact, thanks to an "intervention from above" that we are capable of ". . . opening up to the 'you' that lives in our brothers and sisters in a vital communion. Then each one is able to give up his individuality and to find it again in what we could call our 'we' who speaks with the same voice of Christ, the firstborn of the new humanity."

It is therefore the presence and the work of One who is greater than we are, that can mold us all into a new society. This obviously does not happen without our cooperation. "This commitment toward unity," the Pope added, as he addressed the Gen, "has become your program. It is a program which is eminently Christian. The Pope is very happy to encourage you to go ahead along this way, no matter what it may cost you."

The Generation Gap — is it Impossible to Bridge?

In the summer of 1969, at the Third International Gen Convention, Chiara Lubich spoke about one of the most dramatic social problems of the Western World: the separation which has been created and which threatens to become insurmountable, between the adult generation and the young. The situation was bewildering because it was historically new, at least in such great proportions. The adults seemed lost amid the ruins of their unfulfilled dreams, without even the hope of holding on to the future through their own children. At the same time, the young, who had not been through the war, waged a war of their own. They seemed intent on demolishing what was left of the principles and values the adults held to be indispensable for human coexistence — after all they had seen these principles continuously violated and trampled upon in real life. It was parents against children, and children against parents.

Right then, at the very height of the storm, and in the middle of the chaos and disintegration, Chiara Lubich announced to the Gen that the crisis had been overcome at least within the Focolare Movement and she gave the guidelines for overcoming it in society at large. It was a lucid, powerful talk, and exceptionally well balanced because it had the power of the truth on its side.

Chiara expressed her total confidence in the Gen, saying that "with their totally committed spirit, their readiness to give all without measure, and their willingness to spend the only life they have for God, they are best suited to make Jesus' priestly prayer, 'that all may be one,' become a reality." She then compared them with those adults who have also given us an admirable example, "having left, when they were young, 'father, mother, the possibility of a future family, work and country for God. . . .' " Even though they seem unable to find their old enthusiasm, they now find in the Gen a new impetus to enliven their spiritual and human life and rediscover the truth that we can not enter the kingdom of heaven unless we remain young. "Thus we are no longer able to speak about the old and the new generation but rather of the first and the second generation." ○

PROVEN BY FACTS

We are reporting here a few of the experiences shared during the convention. They give a vivid picture of some concrete accomplishments.

Ascoli Piceno, Italy

The situation at our school makes it difficult for us to establish real relationships with the teachers and other students, and we have to be careful not to get caught up in the different currents of thought that are prevalent — getting ahead at any cost as opposed to giving up completely; apathy as opposed to a frantic kind of protest aimed at changing everything.

We try to love each person we come in contact with — from the student who sits at the next desk, to the teacher who has a different opinion from us, to the janitor we meet every morning on our way in to school. For us, living the Gospel concretely means making our presence felt in a positive way in the school environment. We especially want to do everything possible to bridge the gaps, the divisions that exist today among students, for example, among those with differing political views. Jesus taught us to love everyone; so we can not ignore people simply because they don't agree with us. Rather, we have to try to find something that unites us, something that brings us closer to one another. It is by no means easy to do this and yet we have seen some results. For example in one school, (where the different groups were almost constantly engaged in heated discussions) we decided to stress the similarities which existed between the groups as much as possible, ra-

ther than focusing on the differences. We did this by speaking out at the various meetings and assemblies, and most of all, through our personal contacts. Slowly, by understanding and identifying with the problems of many of the young people in the school, we were able to reach many of them who were politically active. We noticed that a certain mutual respect began to develop between the groups with differing political and religious convictions. This was manifested during one assembly where the list of candidates for Student Government Elections was presented. Instead of hurling themselves into a destructive debate, as had always happened in the past, the different representatives actually agreed to formulate and follow a common platform to solve the problems of the school — regardless of the outcome of the elections. For us this was proof that when the Gospel is truly lived, unity is possible for more than just a few individuals; it can thrive within an entire school.

Later, a few of us were invited to attend the meetings of the Student-Citizen Committee (it was the first time Catholics had become members of this organization which usually represented the leftist student groups). The work involved a large number of students from all over the city. Once again despite the obvious obstacles, a comparison and sharing of ideas was begun which resulted in a new experience of collaboration.

Similar changes have taken place in even more difficult areas. For example, there is a neighborhood on the outskirts of our city where large projects have been built. The buildings were constructed right next to each other without any particular consideration regarding the layout. The people who lived there have left their homes and feel that they are without any roots. Many problems existed in the parish there when we arrived. In fact, there was not even a church built. Mass is still celebrated today in a prefabricated wooden shed.

We did not know where to start so we decided to visit the different buildings to get to know the young people there and begin to reduce the sense of apathy that was so prevalent. We invited them to a get-together in the "church." A few young people came, but this did not mean of course that the problems were solved. They continued to come to these meetings, but for a long time they did not even open their mouths. It seemed as if they were afraid to look one another in the eye. But this did not stop us. . . .

Today the group has grown and has become something vital. Every time we meet there are new young people who want to join us. But now the young people in the neighborhood invite their friends themselves, and they try to establish relationships and fight against the apathy that surrounds them. This has happened because love is stronger than any division. Now even the younger children who are usually just left to roam the streets freely because there is no place for them to go, come to our meetings. In fact, more of them come than the older boys and girls. We do not claim to have solved all the problems of an entire neighborhood. But we can say that a beginning has been made — and that is a sign of hope. A small living cell is going ahead despite the problems it encounters.

Our bishop reminds us often how important it is to work with young people, and help them to become an integral part of their parish and diocesan organizations. Indeed, we work within the parish and offer our experiences to other young people in weekly meetings, where we share how we have put the words of Jesus into practice. Another small community has come into being and is now growing and developing. It serves as a witness, a living and active presence within the parish, and works closely with the pastor and other parish groups. Of course difficulties exist here too; at times there can be misunderstandings but we know that we can not turn back; we have to do all our part to help unity to grow. That means everything we do acquires importance, even the songs at Mass. In fact, we have discovered that the liturgy is the moment of greatest unity for the parish community. Therefore, we do everything we can to convey through the liturgy the true meaning of what is being celebrated, and the discovery that Jesus is living and present there.

We also feel called to go out to those who will probably never be part of our group, but who need hope and a certain sense of security. We try to reach those with some of the problems so prevalent among young people today — drugs, alcoholism and an approach to sex that destroys mutual respect. We organize afternoon meetings for them where we share our experiences in songs, mimes and short talks, which relate small, but concrete examples of how we try to live the Gospel. We are well aware that unless we "are" what we say, our words are useless. But we are not afraid to propose a way of life that "goes against the current," because we have learned that only by following this way do we find true freedom.

From Macao

The number of people who want to join us in this commitment to live the Gospel authenti-

From Brazil

cally grows steadily. The "word of life" continues to spread, becoming a bond of unity among many. In schools, homes, factories, and different work environments and among people of all ages, the words of the Gospel, when lived, transform relationships and resolve many difficult situations. The hope of creating a new way of thinking based on the Gospel is becoming little by little a reality.

Anna Silvestri
and Mauro Bartolini

In the Valley of Rio de Janeiro

We are in Riolandia. A young couple's wedding finishes with a funeral, and consequently, the first stop on their honeymoon becomes the cemetery — to bury one of the guests, the mayor of the town, who had been shot down in church. The opposing political party had hired someone to get rid of him.

Episodes like this are frequent occurrences in Riolandia, a town with a population of 10,000, located near the border of the state of Sao Paolo in Brazil. It has long been a "melting pot" for criminals who escape from the neighboring states.

The earth is very fertile in that region and this has favored the growth of large estates — resulting in poverty for many and rivalry among the rich families over the economic, political and social leadership in the area. Even today this situation causes a constant migration of large portions of the population. In just seven years almost half of the inhabitants left and were replaced by the same number of people who migrated from even poorer areas; this situation causes serious repercussions on many aspects of life — from the family to the society-at-large and even in the religious field.

Logically the first ones to leave are the young people. However, the growing birth rate still gives a youthful appearance to the population, which is easy going, and open to new ideas.

The environment at Riolandia is especially difficult because it reflects all the problems that normally exist on the periphery of big cities. Not surprisingly, the young people are the primary victims.

In one parish in the area something has changed. Following the initiative of the pastor, a group of young people started to live the "word of life," and gradually involved many of their peers. Soon concrete activities began to take shape. Almost everyone in the area was baptized, yet very few knew their faith deeply, so the youth decided to organize catechism classes. The approach they used was both simple and motivating: to try to experience firsthand the vitality of the Gospel in everyday life, and to then share the resulting personal experiences. This led naturally to an understanding of the sacraments — the Eucharist, Penance, Confirmation, Christian Marriage.

With time it became apparent that there were many different problems involving the family, work and school, drug involvement, and social injustice. The need for professional schooling was evident, so study and training courses were organized to meet this need with many young professors offering their services free of charge.

At a certain point we began to ask ourselves the following question: "Will our way of helping others lead to useful solutions for the serious social problems, or will it end up by simply appeasing our consciences?" The basic cause of many of the evils in Brazil can be found in unjust structures, which are imposed by a consumer society. An awareness of this now, when the country seems to be opening up to certain forms of democracy, has meant a lot for these young people. They have understood that they cannot remain closed within the confines of their own city. Having experienced the revolution of the Gospel in their own lives, they feel compelled to bring it into the existing social structures.

Now that some time has passed, we are beginning to understand the answer to the question we had posed earlier. We have seen that, by consistently working along this line, wider horizons have opened up for us. In the beginning "increasing awareness" meant giving those

who were oppressed the awareness of their dignity as human beings, in order to help them out of a state of inferiority and injustice. Now we know that everyone must be presented the alternative of a new society which is founded on the Gospel, because this society offers infinitely more than the consumer or marxist societies, which represent two inflexible forms of slavery that confine and trap the individual.

Nino Carta and Edna

Palmares: In the Hunger Triangle

The city of Palmares is located in an area which has come to be known as the "hunger triangle" of Brazil. Its 360 thousand inhabitants are mostly Catholics, divided into fifteen parishes; however spiritualism has also taken hold in the area. An astounding sixty five per cent of the population is made up of young people under twenty two years of age.

One characteristic element of the socioeconomic situation in Palmares is the presence of a small group of very rich people who get wealthier all the time, while the majority of the inhabitants live in poverty and utter destitution. Within this framework a general picture of life there could be summed up as follows:

— The majority of families have very low moral standards. Their lifestyle leads easily to marital infidelity and prostitution, and real communication between parent and child, the fundamental basis of all family life, is blocked.

— The educational system does not meet the needs of the people. To the detriment of their studies, many young people must work in order to support themselves while in school.

— On account of inadequacies in the civil and religious education of the community, the abuse of drugs and alcohol is becoming always more widespread, as is juvenile prostitution.

Consequently, young people have lost hope for the future. They flee from reality in order to chase after daydreams; they move to the south of Brazil to find a "better life," but more often than not end up in the slums, forever uprooted from their families and their culture.

In order to come to terms with this serious situation, the local Church in Northeast Brazil issued directives proposing a plan of action which would use the social situation as a reference point, and would lead young people to true freedom from all kinds of "slavery," through a life based on the Gospel.

The proposal was directed to the young people themselves: they were the ones who would have to implement it — not shutting themselves up within one area, but rather acting as leaven for the masses, reaching out above all in their particular fields of study and work.

It was decided to first of all form leaders among the young people who would be able in turn to form other young people. The next step would be to familiarize the young people with certain documents of the Church — especially the statement issued by the bishops of Puebla — in order to open them up to a communitarian way of life by presenting them with a new lifestyle based on that of the early Christians. In this way they would be able to experience firsthand that the Gospel lived, is the only way to build a better world.

Now, some time later, it can be said that the testimony of the 500 young people who took part in this endeavor in the diocese of Palmares has had an unexpectedly great influence, not only in the parishes, but also in schools, and among the poor as well.

AN IMMENSE TASK

At the end of the last century we witnessed a global transformation of civilization. Obviously all those values that were bound up to the preceding structures underwent a terrible jolt, beginning with the government, to family life, and the life of the Church itself. All this has been a change for the better, despite the ups and downs of the course of events.

What are we Christians doing? We are attempting to make something that is partly negative, entirely positive. This is certainly an immense task that all of mankind has to carry out, and that we can accomplish with all of humanity. I think that if all Christians acquire a mentality based profoundly on the Gospel, and give a true witness to fundamental Christian values — like the value of human life, freedom and life in society — then they will be able to give life to a new society. At times we are completely taken by the decline of the old society and fail to see that a new society is coming to life.

(Excerpt from a talk to the Gen December 13, 1974.) FATHER PASCAL FORESI

Since 1977 there had been groups of young people living the "word of life" in several parishes in the diocese. In unity with their bishop, Acacio Rodriguez Alves, and their priests, they have committed themselves to living the Gospel in a profound way. With these groups as a basis, it was not difficult to form a central committee which then defined several concrete goals in line with the directives issued by the local church.

The project has borne many, many fruits — perhaps the greatest of these are known to God alone. Young people, having rediscovered the meaning of their lives, have returned to the Church and sometimes become true leaders among the youth.

"Why should I use drugs anymore?" a young man confided to the friends with whom he had begun to live the "word of life." "The emptiness which I felt before

has now been filled! It is beautiful to live the Gospel together. I would never have made it on my own."

The new life within these parishes where young people find the possibility to fulfill themselves, has also attracted some young seminarians who, with their bishops' permission, have come together to live in a small community in one of the parishes. They too, have made a deeper choice of God similar to the one made by the other young people, and in this way, have become more certain of their own calling.

In another parish on the border of Rio de Janeiro the pastoral work in the community has been entrusted to a Sister. Around her too, life is flourishing. The "technique" is always the same: living the "word of life," which attracts young people and helps them to grow.

Recently, when a Vocation Week was held in this diocese, seventy young people gathered to meditate and pray together that they might come to know God's plan for their lives.

In Rio de Janeiro, as in Northeastern Brazil and Sao Paolo, the spirituality of the Focolare Movement has proven to be a total and demanding way of life, for young and old alike. Basing everything on a total choice of God, it is at the same time, capable of giving concrete solutions to the difficult social and political problems of this locality and it demands of each person to be ready to give his or her life for the others without any half-measures.

Flavio and Fatima

A Symbolic Case: West Berlin

I have been living in Berlin for six years. This city is like an island in the heart of the German Democratic Republic and is cut in two by the famous "wall." Because of its geographical inland location it is even further isolated from the rest of Europe.

As soon as I arrived here I was named assistant pastor of a parish that was practically on top of the Berlin wall. It did not take me very long to get a clear idea of the actual religious situation in Berlin. The Catholics are scattered all over the city. While they account for 12 per cent of the total population, only 10 percent of these participate at Sunday Mass. The other Christian Churches find themselves in similar, at times worse, situations, due to a radical secularization that has infiltrated the entire social and cultural fabric here. A statement made by Bishop Dareels of Brussels during the last Synod suits Berlin perfectly. He said, "For the first time, we have parents who are unable to pass the faith on to their children."

The world of youth mirrors this dramatic situation. 95 per cent of the young people here have nothing to do with the Church. At 16 or 17 years of age they usually leave home to live on their own, attempting to create an environment that will satisfy their desires. They lack neither money nor opportunities for work (even though they consider work alienating). And their leisure time — which is consequently abundant — does not automatically make them free or happy . . . .

Things are no better for those who feel even the slightest inclination toward religion. The official youth groups are subsidized by the government and this fact alone leaves them wide open to criticism and unconditional refusal by the youth. The young people look for other directions to take, and end up either closing themselves off in small groups isolated from the

From Rome

rest of society, or by never taking any definite commitment, remaining forever insecure deep down.

When the Pope was in Germany, speaking to the young people in Monaco, he said something quite prophetic: "All those who do not live with Jesus Christ are already escaping." This is the root of the insecurity, anguish and solitude that exists here deep in many hearts. And this flight from oneself is also at the root of the almost spasmodic search for sexual relationships which so many young people pursue. But the bitterness left by a relationship severed because it was based only on egoism, ends up provoking a further flight from oneself. . . .Because of this, for example a third of Berlin's young people decide not to marry, but instead "try out" living with another person, ready to change for someone else if the first arrangement does not work out.

Together with a few other priests I began to try to live mutual love according to the new commandment of Jesus. We shared our problems and expectations, but above all, our spiritual and apostolic life. We began to understand better that more than anything else, the youth of Berlin wanted us to share in their life, just as Jesus had done with us.

I remember one occasion when I was asked to organize a weekend for a group of young people who were not involved in the Church. I tried to work out a program with them, but no one really knew what

to do. In the end we decided to talk about education. We began on Saturday, but no one felt like talking. . . . They put on some records and began to dance and drink. . . . By late that night, many of them were stone drunk. On Sunday morning almost all of them remained in bed until very late and as a result we had to skip watching a film we had planned to see. They all prepared lunch together, but more for fun than for any other reason. Consequently, it all had to be thrown out. But this was no problem for them: everybody off to a restaurant to get a good meal!

I remained alone with a young girl who had come with me from my parish so that at least two of us would be trying to do something for Jesus. We cleaned up and prepared for Mass. Two young men came to it also and one of them told me, "I have always felt lonely in this group."

As we returned to the parish that night we were happy because, as we told one another, our task was to maintain a contact with these young people no matter how long it would take to reach them. The weekend had not been a failure, but rather a stimulus to go ahead remaining open to everything and everyone.

Gradually, especially because of the unity among us priests, a small group of young people grew within the parish. Having considered the particular situation of our own city, we felt it was necessary to bring these few young people into contact with others from other countries. We have visited some parishes in Italy, and for these young people the most significant experience there was that of staying with Christian families. This takes on an even greater importance when one recalls that over half of the families in Berlin are in great difficulty. Groups of young people from Italy and other German cities such as Hamburg and Hannover have in turn come to Berlin, and this exchange — which we intend to continue — has proven to be very fruitful.

Georg Schlutter ●

A LIFE LIVED FOR OTHERS

by NEDO POZZI

The powerful story of a fireman, whose life has become an inspiration for many, because of his incredible courage and generosity.

January 2, 1981. Luciano Petik, chief of the 4th Squad of Milan's Fire Department, died in a blazing fire which broke out in the hills surrounding Lake Maggiore.

He was engrossed in the work of putting out the fire, when the wind suddenly changed direction, and he was enveloped in a cloud of smoke. He lost his balance, plunging into the very heart of the blaze.

To fall in the line of duty often serves as an epilogue that compensates for the whole of one's existence. In Luciano's case, however, we discovered that, preceding his sudden death, was an entire life aimed at helping, comforting and protecting the "least of his brethren," those on the periphery of society. After all, he had been one of them.

Luciano was born on July 20, 1937, the last child of an older couple. His great-great-grandfather was of slavic origin, but for generations the Petik family had lived in Milan. In 1943 Luciano's father passed away. It was war time. Life in the city was a constant study in the art of just getting by. Luciano was agile, naive, exuberant . . . "I couldn't keep still," he once told us. "I was always climbing trees or up on rooftops . . . my mother often had to ask the neighbors to help her get me down." Inevitably, he was easy prey for people who made a living in a less than honest fashion. They would use him for petty thefts and then pay him with candy.

His mother couldn't keep up with him. After talking it over with the older children, she decided to place him in a boarding school in an attempt to keep him out of trouble. Luciano was sent to "Martinitt," an institution for orphans in Milan.

It was a bitter experience. "I was there 10 years," he told us, "and I know what it's like . . . Before, I had been free and wild, then suddenly, I had to conform . . . A whistle dictated what we were to do: sit down, stand up . . . every move was made with the whistle, there was no love . . . "

His mother came to visit him once a month; at least he had her. In the eyes of his companions, who had neither parent, he was in a privileged position. He did not have the heart to hide the gifts he received, as others might have. Luciano would come out of the visiting room with a big box of candy in his hand and in an instant all he had left was the letter that came with it and the joy of having given something to the others.

"Luciano was always like that," his wife Teresa told us. "His mother used to tell me that when he'd return from the bakery with their small ration of bread, he would have crowds of grateful dogs around him. The children who would go with him when he went to the store for milk would come home with a mustache of cream around their mouths . . . he would add water to the bottle so he wouldn't get scolded."

When he was old enough to get a job, he left the boarding school. The suffering he had gone through there helped him to mature. After a short experience in a workshop, he chose a profession which would satisfy his need to serve and to be active: he decided to become a fireman.

He had grown into a sturdy young man, pleasant and strong, yet gentle. For quite some time, he had been seeing his childhood friend Teresa on a casual basis. They had always been very close, partly because of a strong friendship which existed between the two families.

Before he left for school to be trained as a fireman, Luciano asked Teresa to wait for him. But Teresa had other plans: she wanted to consecrate herself to God in the religious life, even though her family was strongly opposed to this. Both Luciano and Teresa entered into a period of searching and waiting. There were several instances when they started out in what seemed to be the right direction for their lives, only to find that it was not meant to be. It was like the unraveling of a design that would bring them together once again some years later.

In 1963, Teresa and Luciano got married. Their first years together were happy ones. But no children came. Since they saw so many abandoned children in need of a family, they decided not to seek medical treatment. Instead, they applied to adopt a child. Maurizio arrived — he was nine months old and a beautiful, healthy baby.

"But since we liked children so much," Luciano later related, "we decided to adopt another child. However, something had begun to mature in us. The first time, we had adopted a small, beautiful baby — after all, that's what everyone who wants to adopt has in mind: small, beautiful children, without defects. Almost no one chooses the older ones, who are over eight years of age. We went to the agency, and it was just as we had thought — there were many unadopted older children. One of the ones they told us about was a fourteen-year-old boy who was badly in need of a family. The drawback was that he had many problems, and they proceeded to list them for us. It was somewhat discouraging. We asked where he was currently staying. 'At a boarding school called Martinitt.' We made our decision right then and there. 'We will take him into our home.' The man at the agency was stunned. 'I lived there once myself,' I told him; 'I know what it's like there.' That is how Renato came to be part of our family. He was a fine young man, even taller than I am. His arrival in our home took me back to my childhood — my liveliness, the trauma of the boarding school, the punishments we received there. Of course, when Renato lived there treatment was less severe. But, still, some things leave an indelible mark on a person. That's how it is. There is such a great need for love — one can't just sit back and wait for someone else to do something. I'm inclined to run — I have been all my life, without stopping even for a moment, without ever being afraid of anything."

In April 1977, the Petik family took part in a large gathering of families which was held at a stadium in Milan. It was their first encounter with the New Family Movement.

Luciano discovered in the spirituality of the Focolare a basis for his thrust to reach out to those who are most forsaken. The root was found in a personal relation-

This is the Petik family: Luciano and Teresa with their two adopted sons — Maurizio in the center, and Renato who, at 14 years of age, was welcomed into the family after his sad experience in a boarding school. Luciano's love for those abandoned by society constantly led him to give concrete help to whoever was in need.

ship with Jesus, who is present in the midst of two or more united in his name (see Mt. 18:20). Only with this foundation could all his activity and projects acquire their true value.

A few years later he told some friends:

"When I met the Movement I understood that sometimes I need to stop for a moment and consider what is really best for my wife, the children, and also for myself. Then I realize that my most important task is to love Jesus in these children. At times they don't get along with one another; jealousy breaks out. I come home tired from running all the time, and I get upset with them. . . . Then I realize what's happening and I say I'm sorry. I keep becoming more aware of the living presence of Jesus within me, and in the 'least of my brethren' that I meet. Naturally, the difficulties are there, but love overcomes every obstacle. You need courage and strength in life; you have to have faith. Perhaps I didn't really have it before. That is, I believed, but always 'in a hurry.' I guess that's what it's all about — to have courage and to believe. Because these 'least' have a real need for love."

This was the beginning of innumerable initiatives, contacts and new friendships. It was such an explosion that, at times, he had to hold himself back in order to be certain that his unity with Teresa and his other friends of the New Families was maintained. His desire to help others was so great.

Massimo, a nine-year-old boy, came to live with them. He was somewhat physically handicapped and his family had rejected him. His life was a continuous move from one institution to another because he wasn't able to adapt to any environment due to some behavioral problems. He refused to go to school.

In the Petik family he gradually found a new life. He began to realize that he was "someone;" and the fact that he was surrounded by love made him want to respond by working harder at school. He was able to catch up and was promoted. Unfortunately, however, his presence disturbed the other two children and jealousy broke out. The atmosphere at home became tense and unbearable. Teresa and Luciano were forced to give up and take Massimo back to the institution that he had come from.

Luciano and Teresa on their wedding day. The years they spent together were for both a constant giving of themselves to the others, both at home and outside. Luciano used to say: "The need for love is too great; we can't stand still and wait. I am inclined to run."

It was an extremely hard decision for them to make, especially for Luciano who always hated to give up. He returned periodically to visit Massimo, even after the difficult search for a family to love Massimo had ended successfully.

Serenella and Massimo Polizzi, two friends of Luciano, told us: "This was what hurt Luciano the most — being unable to help someone in need. Whenever we met with the group of New Families, he would share his adopted children's problems, as well as those of other young people in trouble, the alienated, lonely senior citizens, orphans — all people he helped and was in contact with. He did not seem to have any problems of his own; he gave his life to solve other people's problems.

There are many examples.

He taught Mark a trade that he had done when he was young. He helped him to understand what to do with his engagement that was not going well, until Mark found the courage to break it and eventually found God again.

Fran had no father, so Luciano played the part. He painted her house, advised her about a job and protected her from her somewhat overdomineering brother. He even visited her aging mother at times.

Then there was Julie, an unwed mother. He invited her to lunch at their home and took her little boy on vacation with them to the mountains.

Valerie and Leonard (she was Greek Orthodox and he Roman Catholic) moved from Rome because of his work, but were unable to find an apartment in Milan. The Petik family opened their home up to them for three months until Luciano was able to find a place for them to live, and had fixed it up and painted it. Just as it was ready, Valerie found out that she was expecting their first child. "I'll never stop thanking God," she confided amid tears during a gathering, "for having made me meet Teresa and Luciano. It's impossible for me to describe what they have meant to me. They even helped my husband return to his faith."

Angela was in love with an ex-drug addict. She turned to Luciano

for advice, help and money. Frank, instead, had many physical and psychological problems — he found a home and work. Lidia, another unwed mother, found help and a place to stay until she found the right man to marry.

For the juvenile court of Milan, the Petik family was a stable point of reference. Luciano was called upon often to give advice, and acted as coordinator for preparing foster families.

Luciano Petik (first to the left) directs his squad in the operation of extinguishing a fire. The other firemen remember him as someone who " . . . always helped everyone. The most important thing for him was the individual, everything else came afterwards. Even though 'afterwards' hardly existed for him. He lived immersed in the present."

In fact the court even entrusted a six-year-old girl, Sonia, to the Petik family for the summer last year. They brought her to the shore with them and even invited her mother, a woman of dubious character, to spend a day with them. Despite her negative attitude, Luciano asked her to stay for lunch and dinner. When she decided to go, he drove her to the train station and even bought her ticket since she had no money. Now she has tried to put things in order in her life and has taken Sonia back with her.

While at the shore, Luciano came close to death. Due to an accident he found himself alone, far from the shore, with two children clinging to him. "I am ready to die," he told himself, "but these two kids have to be saved." He resisted almost beyond his strength. When a rescue crew finally arrived, they dragged him out of the water wounded, scratched and swollen with water. But he did not feel like a hero. Only later that evening at Mass did he cry quietly.

But his appointment with God was not far off.

We went to visit Luciano's work companions at the firehouse of Milan. These strong men who are used to hard work and danger were unable to speak at times because they got choked up with tears. Luciano had been more than a work companion for them; he had been a true friend.

They recounted how it had all happened. They had just come back from the earthquake zone in southern Italy. As usual, Luciano had distinguished himself for his unlimited generosity. Even the younger and stronger firemen gave up before he did. He reached out especially to the weakest, to those who amid tears dug in the ruins with their hands in the hope of finding something of their possessions.

On January 2 he went out with a different squad because his own had been given some time off to rest up after returning from their assignment in the earthquake zone. There were many alarms during that period since numerous forest fires were breaking out due to the dry weather and strong winds.

The head office in Milan, which is the central location for the entire province of Lombardy, was overwhelmed by calls.

"His death is unexplainable. . . . I just can't believe it, it's not possible. . . . Someone like him with twenty-four years of experience. . . . For me it's a mystery."

"He listened to everyone, even the newest members of the squad, without ever throwing the weight of his position around."

"I'm a Catholic, but I don't go to church. I always envied Luciano because he had the courage to do certain things. I don't have any brothers, but I'm certain that, if I did, they could never have loved me as much as Luciano did."

"Woe to the man who tried to beat him when there was something dangerous to be done. . . . He always wanted to be the first in order to reassure whoever had to follow him."

"He always helped everyone. The men of the 4th Squad can bear witness to this. When reinforcements arrived the voice went around: 'Petik is here. . . thank goodness it's Petik!' This happened because he had such a warm, generous personality. He was a man more than head of a squad. He believed in God, but he didn't bother looking at everyone else's political parties or opinions. The most important thing for him was the individual; everything else came later. Even though for him 'later' hardly existed. He lived immersed in the present."

"December 31 we got a call. A woman had spilled kerosene on the floor while lighting her stove and the whole room was set aflame. She herself was burning like a torch and, panicstricken, she had

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WORD OF LIFE

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

"What I want is mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt. 9:13).

"What I want is mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt. 9:13).

Do you remember when Jesus said these words? He was at dinner, and a number of tax collectors and sinners had come to sit at the table with him. When some of the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples: "Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard this he replied:

"Go and learn the meaning of the words: 'What I want is mercy and not sacrifice.' "

Here Jesus is citing a passage from the prophet Hosea, and by doing so he is indicating that he likes the concept it expresses. It reflects, in fact, the norm that he himself lived by. For Jesus love comes before any other commandment, rule or precept.

This is what makes Christianity new. Jesus came to tell us that, what God wants first of all from us, in our relationships with other people, is love, and he points out that the Scriptures had already announced that this was God's will, as the words of the prophet Hosea illustrate.

Love is the program that Christians are to live by, the fundamental law that must govern their actions, the criterion upon which they must base their every move.

Love must take precedence over all other laws. Indeed Christians must consider love of neighbor as a prerequisite for the legitimate observance of every other law.

"What I want is mercy, not sacrifice."

Jesus wants love, and mercy is an expression of love, and he wants us to live in this way, above all because this is how God is.

For Jesus, God is first of all the Merciful One, the Father who loves all of us, who makes the sun rise and the rain fall on good and bad alike.

Since Jesus loves everyone, he is not afraid to mingle with sinners, and in this way he reveals to us how God is.

Therefore, if God is like this, if Jesus loves in this way, then we too should do the same, nurturing within ourselves the same sentiments.

"What I want is mercy, not sacrifice."

". . . not sacrifice."

If we do not love those around us, Jesus is not pleased by our religious practices. He is not interested in our prayers, our going to church, or the sacrifices we might make, unless all of this comes from a heart which is at peace with everyone else, filled with love towards all.

Remember his forceful words during the Sermon on the Mount: "So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering" (Mt. 5:23-24).

These words tell us that the offering most pleasing to God is love for our neighbor, and that this must be placed at the basis of our worship of God himself.

If you wanted to give your father a gift, and yet were fighting with your brother or sister (or they with you), undoubtedly your father would say to you: "Go, make peace with your brother, then come and offer me whatever you wish."

There is more, however. Love is not only the basis of a Christian life; it is also the best way to remain in union with God. The saints tell us this, and Christians who live their faith experience it. If they help those around them, especially those most in need, their union with God becomes deeper, their devotion to him grows, and they become aware that a bond exists between them and their Lord, which is the source of their greatest joy.

"What I want is mercy, not sacrifice."

How can you live this new word of life?

You can begin by not discriminating among the people with whom you come in contact, not excluding anyone, but offering everyone whatever you can give, following the example of God the Father. Smooth out the disagreements, great or small, that may exist in your life. They are displeasing to heaven and make life bitter. Scripture says to not let the sun go down on your anger towards anyone.

If you act in this way, everything you do will be pleasing to God, and will remain in eternity. Whether you work or rest, play or study, spend time with your children or take your wife out for the day; whether you pray or make sacrifices, or fulfill those religious obligations of your particular Christian vocation — everything can be used for building the kingdom of heaven.

Heaven is a house that we build here and live in there. And we build it by loving.

CHIARA LUBICH

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Gospel.

DARING TO START

Over a year ago a young executive, Mr. Wallis, arrived in our office, having been sent directly by our overseas headquarters. Even before his arrival the entire office was affected because there would be no place for him towork, and consequently two people had to be moved elsewhere in order to tear down a wall and make of two offices one just for him. This caused a lot of heartache to say the least . . . There were a lot of hard feelings which did not disappear immediately. When he finally arrived, he didn't hit it off well with anyone. He was too young, too bright, and too much power had been given to him, bypassing people who had been in the office for many years. Besides all this, he had a very bad temper, and would blow his top at the slightest difficulty. Being a perfectionist, he always sent the work back, no matter who had done it. It took a long time for him to be accepted. Besides, he seemed to trust no one and thought all were wrong.

To make matters worse, a few months after he arrived, the head executive took a two months leave-of-absence, and he was left in complete charge of the office! This created more tension, and those two months were unbearable. If it had not been for the fact that I was trying to live the word of life, I would have quit immediately. But I knew deep down that the Gospel could be lived everywhere, and with everyone, so I kept trying to love, telling myself that love conquers all, and that he would be touched one day by the love of Jesus.

About three months ago I was trying to live the word of life, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted," and I knew it had to do with service. That last week of the month I had tried my best to figure out ways to live it at the office but had found no concrete opportunities. Finally Friday came. I had been left all alone and I happened to enter into his office to deliver some letters that needed his signature. I noticed that it was almost completely covered with documents. I knew that those documents were very important because I had been accumulating them for him for about six months, and I also knew he would eventually have to write a report on them for our overseas office. He had not had a chance to look at them, as he had been out of the office on an outside job for almost the entire month. It dawned on me that I could at least arrange them neatly for him, as I had nothing else to do that afternoon. While I was doing that, I saw endless possibilities to separate them by items, dates, committees, etc., and before I knew it, I had spent the whole afternoon putting them in order, thinking that this could be a service for him, even if he would never know who had done it.

I must confess that up to that time I had never dared to do anything for him besides what was essential, for any attempts of friendship on my part had always been met by a rebuff.

To my great surprise, on Monday morning I found a note on top of my desk. He had written in a bold handwriting: "Thank you, thank you, thank you!!! You have no idea how much you helped me. I was desperate with the deadline on the report, and saw no way of tackling the mountain of documents before starting the report. It's now finished and ready for typing."

I felt a great joy! Jesus had shown me that there are no 'difficult' people in the world. That even the most 'impossible' ones can be won over by love.

The other day I heard him say to someone else in the office, "You must give so and so the benefit of the doubt. We should always trust people and not judge them before we really know a situation . . . "

A.R.

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jumped from the balcony. When we got there she was lying outside on the ground and the flames were falling on her from the balcony. Luciano ran directly to her to move her body. The rest of us were more concerned with stopping the fire from spreading, but for him people always came first."

"He was like a father to me. One day we got a call because there was someone locked in his home refusing to open the door to anyone. When we arrived we heard a voice from inside say: 'Stop or I'll shoot!' Luciano immediately pushed me aside saying: 'If someone has to die, it better be me, because I'm older than you are.' "

Andrew, Walter, Ignazio, Peter and all the others remember Luciano in this way — the strong fireman who was able to reassure people who were desperate with a glance, with his courage and his love. He was the rescue man with the big heart who, on his free time, went to visit the people he had saved in order to love them all the way to the end.

Teresa told us: "Now I'm glad he was the way he was. My only regret is that at times I stopped him. Now that he has left us, I realize that he was right, because that way he didn't waste time. We sometimes think that time will never end, but the truth is that we have very little of it and we really have to hurry. Luciano's life was a real race." Truly, it was a constant, never ending race to love: to that Love, that, like a whirl of fire, has carried him off on a mountain.

The funeral took place on January 4, on the day we celebrated the Epiphany this year. After the Gospel, Bishop Libero Tresoldi, auxiliary bishop of Milan spoke of Luciano in this way: "Why does it seem in some moments that God chooses the best for certain sacrifices? This mystery follows humanity since the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. When these people die they leave an emptiness behind them, but at the same time, hope is enkindled. It is a sign that God does not abandon us; he shares our history, and through these sacrifices he is preparing for us a better, more serene world. ●

Images FOR words

"All sanctity consists in loving God; and the love of God consists in doing his will."

St. Alfonsus Liguori

United Nations

The very young and the Gospel

An Interview by ROSEMARY MORAN

The Gen 4 of the Focolare Movement are young children between the ages of three and seven who want to live the Gospel message of love. We recently dropped in on a Gen 4 meeting in Philadelphia and asked some of them to tell us a little more about their life.

Kim: A Gen is someone who really loves other people.

Colleen: We live the virtues like Patience and Benevolence and Generosity.

Mary Chiara: We are learning about God's laws like "Give him the first place in your life," and "Obey your father and mother." We try to live them.

Tina: This year we made a pact of mutual love. That means we just decided to always love one another. All the time.

Mary Chiara: And to love the people we meet too. *Mutual* love means loving until the other person loves you back. Then there is Jesus in the midst. But if your friend doesn't love you back you keep on loving anyway.

Kim: When we started the pact we had so many experiences, because everybody was loving. Even more than they did before.

Colleen: One thing we decided to do was to have a Garage Sale. Do you know why we wanted to have it? So that we could get some money to give to the others who needed it.

Tina: We were talking about mutual love, and we said, "Mutual love means sharing what you have with everybody, not just with your friends or your family." Sometimes older people share their money. . .

Bonnie: Because a lot of times grown-ups have a lot of money. Either they have it in the bank or they have it in their pockets. But *we* don't really have much money.

Kim: We did have a lot of toys and books and things that we could share. So we decided to make a Garage Sale and sell all of them.

Tina: All of us went home and looked through our things and picked out the ones we wanted to bring to the sale. Loving is not really just giving the people what you don't like. It's giving them what you *do* like too.

Then we asked our mother or father if it was ok to sell those toys and books, and they always said, "OK."

The Gen 4 then cleaned all the toys, made sure that they worked, put them in bags if there were lots of pieces and then priced them.

They prepared flyers, coloring them themselves to give to their friends and to hang on the trees in the neighborhood.

The day of the Garage Sale, they set up five card tables for the toys and one for refreshments.

As children came to the sale the Gen would ask them what they were looking for and advise them about what to buy. Several times when a child didn't have enough money for a particular toy one of the Gen would come over to ask if we could lower the price and of course we did. After a while it became apparent that very few kids were going to buy cookies because faced with the option of spending 15 cents on food, or 15 cents on toys, most of them were

choosing to buy toys. Bonnie then decided that we should give them the cookies anyway because in her opinion: "Some of them looked hungry." When she asked the other Gen 4 how they felt about it they all agreed and so from then on refreshments were free.

At the end of the day the Gen had made $45; they were really happy and want to do it again.

○

It was true that the Gen 4 had more experiences after the pact of mutual love. In fact, we only have room to publish a few of the ones they recounted that day.

At our Gen 4 meeting we used to be learning about the vices and the virtues, and so we had a card game about them and I really liked it. But two meetings ago our Gen leader forgot to bring the game with her to the meeting, and so we couldn't play it. I was very sorry about it, but I thought about patience, and so I didn't complain.

Then at the last meeting, our Gen leader was telling us about the Laws of God for a New World. Afterwards I asked her didn't she bring the card game but she said, "No, because we've finished learning about the vices and the virtues so maybe we'll do some new games now." That made me very sad because we really did like to play that game.

But at our meeting today we really got the hundredfold. After we shared our experiences she said, "Now, who would like to play the card game of the vices and the virtues?" And then everybody got to play it.

Mary Chiara,
7 years old

One day me and Cesco wanted to go to the park. So I asked my mommy if I could ride my bike and go with Cesco, and she said, "Yeah." So we rode our bikes and she said she would come in the car later.

But when she came and said that it was time to go home I was still riding my bike and I wanted to keep on doing it but I loved my mommy and went on home.

Michela, 5 years old

Sometimes I feel like being lazy, but I am a Gen and Gen try to be industrious. So when my mother asks me to put on my pajamas almost all the time I do it very quickly!

Colleen, 6 years old

I had a necklace with a little dog on it, and one day my friend Maggie asked me for it. I thought about lending it to her, but instead I said that she could keep it for good.

Tina, 5 years old

My mother bought us some new barrettes. In the morning after our hair was combed she told me I could pick which ones I wanted to wear, and I picked the star barrettes. Then my sister started crying because she wanted to wear the star barrettes too. I didn't do anything. Then I went into her room and said, "Here. You can have one of them and I will have the other." But she said, "No." And she kept on being sad. I wanted to love my sister, and so I went back into her room and this time I gave her both barrettes. I let her wear them because loving is more important.

Christina, 5 years old

When we came home from picking up my daddy at the train station everybody got out of the car. Then my mommy turned around and said, "Teresa, please close the car door." I was already half way up the steps but I did it anyway, and that is generosity. It is a virtue.

○

One day I was holding a bowl of apples. My mother gave it to me. And my friend Johnny was over here playing with me. I was holding the bowl on my lap and giving out slices of apple, but Johnny wanted me to put the bowl on the table so he could take his slices by himself. I really wanted to hold them on my lap but I put them on the table to love him.

Teresa, 3 years old ●

FAMILY LIFE

EVERY DAY MORE BEAUTIFUL

by AGATHA O'DONNELL

It was a blow for me to learn, shortly after we got married, that I might be unable to have children. I tried to put my trust in God and let his will be done for me.

We were overjoyed when I later became pregnant with our first daughter. But then the doctors recommended that I stop working because there was a danger I would miscarry. I tried to put aside my anxiety and leave everything up to God. Everything went ahead fine and when she was born she seemed to be as healthy as could be.

World War II was still going on and I had moved out to the West Coast to be closer to my husband. It meant being far away from the rest of my family.

Not long after I brought her home, I noticed that the baby turned blue whenever I laid her on her stomach. I rushed her to the doctor and they told me that some gland was enlarged and would need x-ray treatments.

My husband's base was some distance away and I felt alone and scared. I phoned him and together we decided to pray for whatever God wanted from us.

After just two treatments she was fine. These difficulties made me more aware of the gift God had given us. I felt his love for us and at the same time a great responsibility. Here was a little person given to us to take care of for him. I never possessed my children. They always belonged to God.

After the war we moved back to the East Coast. Our second little girl was born and we named her Pat. She slept at night, ate well and did not seem to have any problems whatsoever.

One Saturday afternoon she was sleeping in her carriage on the porch and I was making her formula. She cried a little, but then was quiet. Later when I went to pick her up I knew immediately something was wrong. My husband called the doctor and an ambulance, but somehow I knew that Pat had returned to God. When the doctor arrived he confirmed my fear.

I prayed hard to see God's will in this. There were moments when I almost felt overwhelmed by guilt thinking that I could have done something to save her. Also other people did not always help. On my first trip to town, two weeks after my baby's death, a woman thoughtlessly made the remark: "Oh, you're the woman who smothered her baby." (Of course at that time little was known about the "sudden death syndrome.") I thought I was going crazy. The only thing that really sustained me during this period of time was the support of my husband and family and the certainty that somehow everything that happened was God's will for me. God gave me a special grace to live moment by moment. Little by little, an inner peace returned. Now I see that experience as a special gift from God.

A short time later I became pregnant again. Another little girl was born. This time they discovered in the hospital that she had a medical problem. Needless to say I was very anxious. Even after she came home and it became apparent that the problem had cleared up, I still spent many a sleepless night listening for her breathing.

As the girls grew I continually placed them under the protection of Mary. When they were teenagers I realized that I could not overprotect them, and yet I had to always be available to help them get back on the right track whenever they stumbled. I always felt that if they knew they were loved just for themselves, and were given a firm background in religion, they would be alright.

At one point my older daughter thought she had a vocation to the religious life. I again prayed that God would direct her in the way he wanted. We tried to leave her free. As it turned out, God had another plan for her.

My younger daughter instead was a rebel. She was always fighting for a cause. I tried to support each of my girls in what they felt was right for them, even though at times I did not agree. But as they grew older I knew I had to step back and be less prominent in their lives. Only God knew what he wanted from each one.

Both girls went on to college, my older daughter getting married shortly after her graduation. Our youngest continued her search for the right "cause." In her junior year she came home from college for Thanksgiving vacation all excited about a "great Movement." I listened, as I always had, but I figured it was just another one of her "causes."

In fact, she seemed to have lost interest in it and I hardly heard her mention it again. Therefore, it was quite a shock for us when she came home another time a few years later and announced that she was leaving to enter the Focolare. I was confused because I hardly knew anything about the Movement, but this time my "mother's intuition" told me that God was calling her and that she was doing what was right for her.

Naturally her decision made me want to get to know the Movement better, so my husband and I went to visit her. I discovered that the spirituality she had chosen to follow could also be lived by a grandmother — which I had become in the meantime.

As I listened and observed, one thing struck me in a particular way: their way of facing suffering. They spoke to me of the moment when Jesus cried out on the cross: "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?" and of how they try to love him in every difficulty and suffering.

It seemed as if my whole life, especially as a mother, was given a new meaning. In many situations in the past, I had tried to go forward, at times blindly. Now it was different. I felt like I was starting a new life.

In addition this life gave an entirely new dimension to my relationship with my daughters. To see Jesus in them to love them in a supernatural way was a new experience. Of course, I feel that I am still their mother, but at the same time we are all children of the same Father, going to God together.

I have a wonderful son-in-law and five lovely grandchildren. Each one is a special gift. It is easy to love them humanly but I want to love Jesus in them. They are all very different from one another and at times it is hard to know how to love each one. For example David is a very strong-willed little boy. Using my adult authority never worked with him. By trying to love Jesus in him I have learned to appreciate his straightforwardness, and we have developed a beautiful relationship.

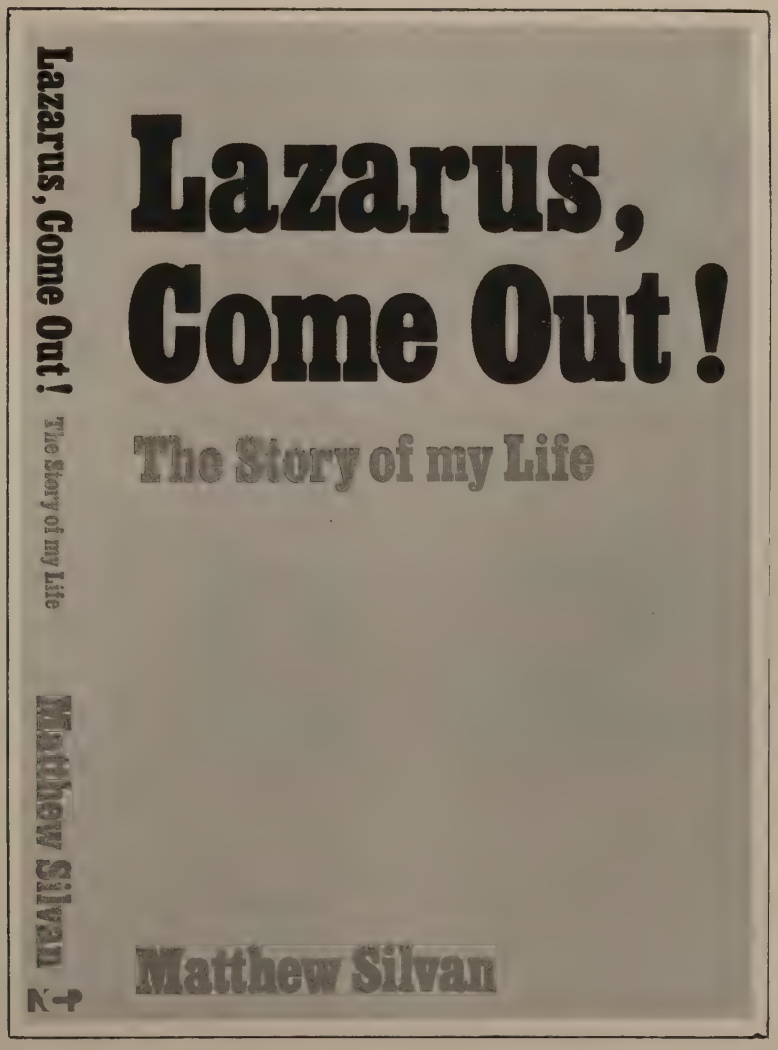
Seeing my two daughters grown now, following the way that God wants for each one of them is like a confirmation for me that he truly had a divine plan for each person. As a mother I always tried to be a model, a listener, a nurse, and many other things, but always with the understanding that I could not possess my children.

My experience as a mother and grandmother is continuing even today. I try to live each day according to that divine plan that he has also for me and I have the impression that everyday is more beautiful than the day before. ●

NOW AVAILABLE!

Is it possible to begin a new life at fifty, to break out of the familiar routine and embark upon a new and risky course? Can convictions built up over a lifetime be suddenly overturned?

In the case of Matthew Silvan, who many of our readers know personally, a successful executive in the world of government finance, a man with responsibility, prestige, a beautiful family and an enviable standard of living, that is exactly what happened.



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PRICE: $5.95

MARIAPOLIS 1981

FOUR MARIAPOLISES WILL BE HELD IN NORTH AMERICA THIS SUMMER! YOU ARE INVITED!

SOUTHWEST:
New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 28, after supper — **July 4,** after breakfast

Las Vegas is in the northern part of New Mexico, the "land of enchantment." It is located about 60 miles east of Santa Fe, at an altitude of 6,500 feet. It is an historic community with a population of approximately 15,000 people. The main route of the famous Santa Fe Trail passes through the New Mexico Highlands University campus where — here and in the surrounding area — the "Wild West" was actually lived. Las Vegas is located on Interstate 25. The nearest large airport is in Albuquerque, 120 miles away. Las Vegas is readily accessible by Greyhound bus and Amtrak train.

NORTHWEST:
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper — **July 18,** after breakfast

Western Washington University occupies a hillside site in Bellingham, overlooking the city, the bay, and many of the San Juan islands. Its architectural blend of the traditional and the modern reflect the majestic beauty of the Pacific Northwest. Modern freeways bring Seattle and Vancouver within easy driving distance. (Bellingham is situated 22 miles south of the Canadian border and 90 miles north of Seattle.) The nearest large airports are in Vancouver, B.C., Canada and Seattle-Tacoma, Washington. Don't forget you'll have to cross the border if you land in Vancouver. Bellingham is readily accessible by Greyhound bus and Amtrak train.

MIDWEST:
University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper — **July 25,** after breakfast

The University of Wisconsin at Whitewater is located on a 385 acre campus in southeastern Wisconsin near the scenic beauty of Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest. It is a one hour drive from Madison and Milwaukee and a two hour drive from downtown Chicago.

EAST COAST:
Alfred University
Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper — **August 8,** after breakfast

Located in New York's rustic Southern tier, Alfred University's 230-acre hillside campus adjoins the village of Alfred and is surrounded by some of the State's most scenic and intriguing attractions. The area boasts bright, mild summer days and cool, sleepable nights. The Village of Alfred, seventy miles south of Rochester, is easily reached by East-West Route 17 (Southern Tier Expressway) and from the North and South by Routes 15, 19, 21 and 36.

About the Mariapolis

The Mariapolises are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the participants will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

For many years the summer convention of the Focolare Movement has been called "Mariapolis" (City of Mary) because Mary is the person who generated Christ. The main goal, in fact, of those who participate in a Mariapolis is to generate the presence of Christ in the community through the practice of mutual and constant charity. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Mt. 18:20). Many Mariapolises take place every year in countries all over the world. In 1980 more than 80,000 people participated in these Mariapolises.

Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 28, after supper to
July 4, after breakfast

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper to
July 18, after breakfast

MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS
University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper to
July 25, after breakfast

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS
Alfred University
Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper to
August 8, after breakfast

Terms of payment

Registration: The registration fee is not included in the accommodations fee. See prices on the back. Please note deadlines for registration and accommodations fees under specification for each Mariapolis. Late registration fee: US$2.50 additional. No registration fee for young people under 18 years of age.

Cancellations in writing received prior to dates indicated for each Mariapolis will be given full refund. After this date money is transferable to another person but not refundable.

Daily rates available for those not attending the whole week.

Young people under 18 years of age should register using the same form even though fee is not required.

1

3 3

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

PLACE STAMP HERE

FOCOLARE MOVEMENT—MARIAPOLIS

ATTENTION!
Where to send your registration:

SOUTHWEST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 71701
  Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O.Box 32302
  San Antonio, TX 78216

NORTHWEST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 71701
  Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 302 — Stn. T
  Toronto, Ontario M6B 4A3
  Canada

MIDWEST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 53426
  Chicago, IL 60653

EAST COAST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 496
  New York, NY 10021 OR
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 302 — Stn. T
  Toronto, Ontario M6B 4A3
  Canada

Special services provided:
Children's Program - Nursery facilities
Simultaneous translations:

SOUTHWEST:	Spanish
MIDWEST:	Spanish and Italian
EAST COAST:	French, Spanish and Ital

(When you check for translation please indicate how many people will be needing it.
Priests should bring their own alb and stol for concelebration.
We cannot provide accommodations pri to the beginning or after the ending of the Mariapolises.
If small children who are not required to pay for accommodations (see each Mariapolis for age limit) use a bed, they will have to pay for it.
Young people under 18 years of age unaccompanied by a parent must have a pe mission slip signed by a parent.
Trailers permitted only at the Northwest Mariapolis. Participants planning to come with trailers should write for rates and conditions. Trailers must be self-contained.
Pets are not allowed in dormitories.

2

To register for the 1981 Mariapolis please fill in the registration form on the reverse side.
For your convenience this page can be transformed into an envelope as indicated to the right.

1. Tear off page.
2. Cut along dotted lines.
3. Fold back lines nos. 1 and 2.
4. Fold back line no. 3.
5. Fold flap over.

Before filling out this **REGISTRATION FORM**
please read carefully detailed information
on both sides of the form

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 28, after supper to
July 4, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons . . . . . US$ 50
Married couples . . . . . US$ 70
No registration fee for young people under 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults . . . . . US$130
Children (3-12 years) . . . . . US$ 60
No accommodation fee for children under 3 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$30. Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

Registration fee due by **June 5**
Payment in full due by **June 15**

Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 19**

Box lunch provided last day without additional charge.

No towels provided.

SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATIONS:
Spanish ☐ # (Please check if needed and specify number)

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper to
July 18, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons . . . . . US$ 50
Married couples . . . . . US$ 70
No registration fee for young people under 19 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults . . . . . US$140
Youth (11-18 years) . . . . . US$ 95
Children (2-10 years) . . . . . US$ 70
No accommodation fee for children under 2 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$25. For children from 2 to 10 years, who sleep in their parents' room with sleeping bags, fee is US$45. Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

MEALS ONLY:
Adults and youth . . . . . US$ 75
Children (2-10 years) . . . . . US$ 45

Registration fee due by **June 8**
Payment in full due by **June 22**

MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS

Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper to
July 25, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons . . . . . US$ 50
Married couples . . . . . US$ 70
No registration fee for young people under 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults . . . . . US$130
Children (4-10 years) . . . . . US$ 70
No accommodation fee for children under 4 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$35. For children between 4 and 10 with sleeping bags in their parents' room, fee is US$35. Please specify on the registration form is so desired.

Registration fee due by **June 19**
Payment in full due by **June 30**

Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **July 3**

Box lunch provided last day without additional charge.

SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATIONS: ☐ Spanish
(Please check if needed and specify number) # ☐ Italian

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper to
August 8, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons . . . . . US$ 50
Married couples . . . . . US$ 70
No registration fee for young people under 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults . . . . . US$130
Children (3-12 years) . . . . . US$ 70
No accommodation fee for children under 3 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$35. Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

Registration fee due by **July 6**
Payment in full due by **July 17**

Full refund for cancellation received in writing by **July 25**

Box lunch provided last day without additional charge.

I/We will attend the —

- ☐ SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
- ☐ NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
- ☐ MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS
- ☐ EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

NAME(S) OF PARTICIPANT(S)
[Please indicate age and sex of participant(s) under 18 years of age.

ADDRESS: _____
Street **City**

_____
State **Zip** **Tel.**

REGISTRATION(S):
single persons $ _____ **couple $** _____ **Total $** _____

ACCOMMODATIONS:
children $ _____ **adults and youth $** _____ **Total $** _____
Amount enclosed $ _____

(Please make check payable to Focolare Movement in US$)

If you plan to participate in only a part of the Mariapolis please c below—

DAY OF ARRIVAL: _____
breakfast ☐ **lunch** ☐ **dinn**

DAY OF DEPARTURE: _____
breakfast ☐ **lunch** ☐ **dinn**

I will come by car and can offer _____ **number of seats.**

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, with a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total destruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth living for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of their lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all may be one . . . that the world may know that you have sent me, and that you have loved them as you have loved me . . . " (Jn.17: 23). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the Focolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word "fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

THE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their professions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, women, and young people of all social conditions who are free of any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free and willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the Movement and with one another through large or small gatherings, publications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious institutions, can form part of the Movement too because the Movement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Christian religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. Also those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted by one or another of the Movement's aspects.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation.

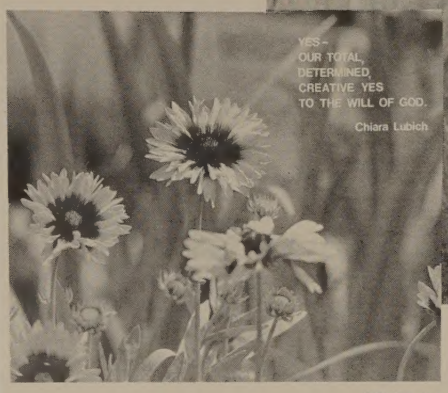
Thousands of young people all over the world have been attracted by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

At the core of this large group of youth, are Gen who have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love. The Gen use all possible means to share with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

Focolare posters

A variety of posters, both color and black and white, are available at all the Focolare Centers. The latest two are in color (15"x18"). All of the posters can be ordered by mail from:
Focolare Movement, P.O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.

FMPcl3



FMPcl4

Price: $2.00/color — $1.50/black and white

If ordered by mail please add handling and shipping charges and specify if you wish to receive them first or third class.

Shipping and handling charges:

FIRST CLASS — **Delivery time: approximately 1 week**

1 poster 1.40, 2 posters 1.55, 3 posters 1.70, 4 posters 1.80. For more than 4 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

THIRD CLASS — **Delivery time: approximately 2 weeks**

1 to 2 posters 1.00, 3 to 4 posters 1.15, 5 to 6 posters 1.30, 7 posters 1.40. For more than 7 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA

NEW YORK:
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021

SAN ANTONIO:
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio, TX 78216

CHICAGO:
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653

LOS ANGELES:
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, CA 90071

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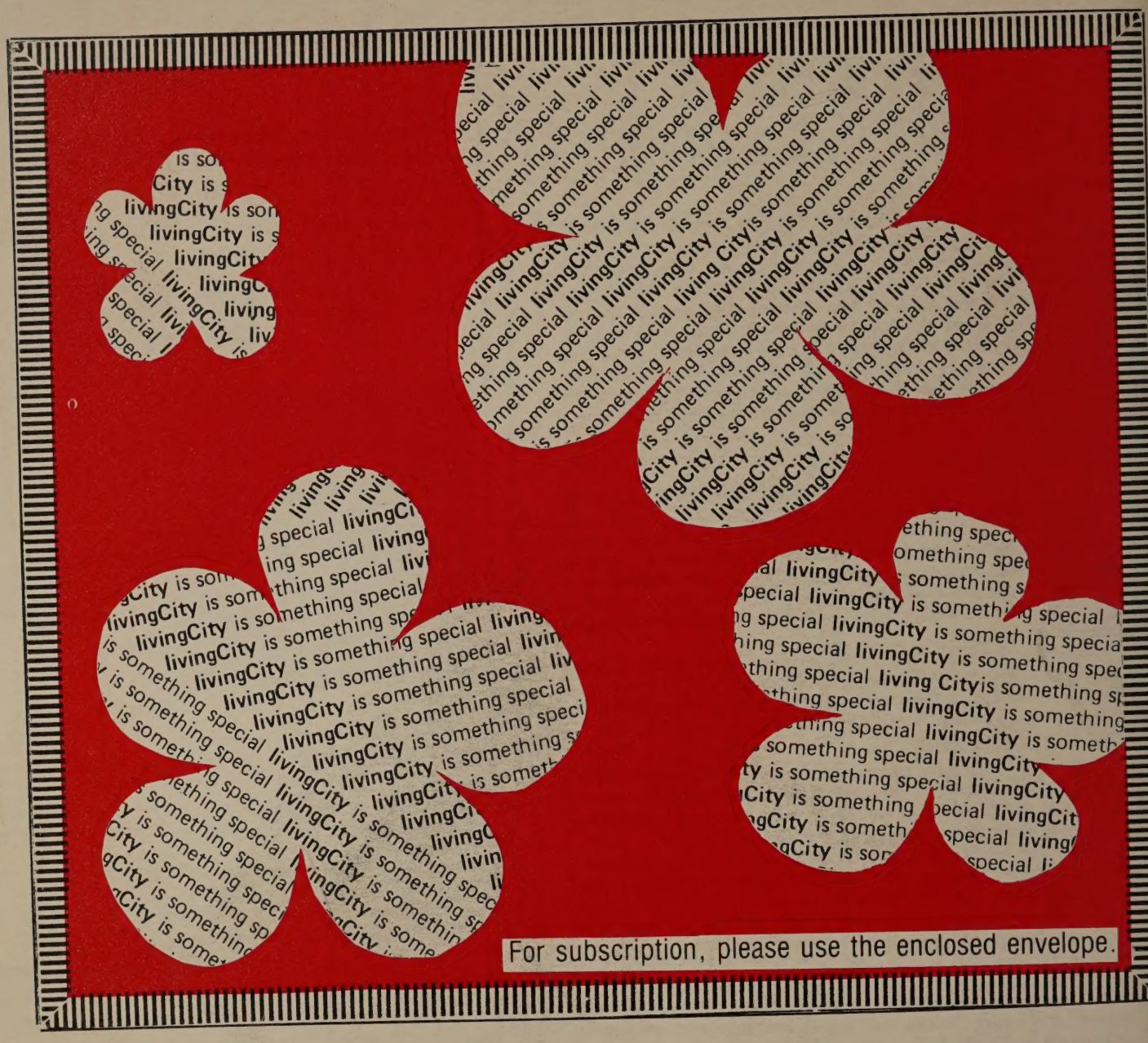

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